DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 408 275 SP 037 366

AUTHOR	Daugherty, Shannon; And Others
TITLE	Credentials and Tests in Teacher Hiring: What Do Districts Require? Issue Brief.
INSTITUTION	American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	IB-3-97
PUB DATE	Feb 97
NOTE	3p.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; *Employment Practices; *Licensing Examinations (Professions); School Districts; State Standards; *Teacher Certification; *Teacher Competency Testing; *Teacher Employment; Teacher Qualifications; Testing
IDENTIFIERS	*National Teacher Examinations

ABSTRACT

In considering applicants for teaching positions, school districts rely on teacher credentials such as state certification or teacher tests to determine the qualifications of a candidate. To determine whether there has been a trend toward increasing reliance on tests in teacher hiring processes, this brief presents data on public school districts' credential and test requirements for three Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) years: 1987-88, 1990-91, 1993-94. In addition, regional variations in test requirements for hiring are presented. Analysis of the data revealed that from 1987-88 to 1993-94, public school districts continued to require credentials more frequently than passage of specific tests. However, the passage of tests, most notably state tests of basic skills and subject knowledge, was increasingly required by districts in their teacher hiring processes during the period. In 1993-94, state tests were relied upon more frequently than the National Teachers Examination (NTE) in the South and Midwest; in the Northeast, this pattern was reversed. (ND)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

ED 408 275

ISSUE BRIEF

Credentials and Tests in Teacher Hiring: What Do Districts Require?

FEBRUARY 1997
IB-3-97

In considering applicants for teaching positions, school districts rely on teacher credentials, such as state certification, or teacher tests to determine the qualifications of a candidate. In a previous Issue Brief, based on the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), it was reported that more public school districts relied on teacher credentials than test scores in both 1987–88 and 1990–91, although the required passage of tests by prospective teachers was increasing among districts (Rossi and Daugherty 1996).

To determine whether there has been a trend toward increasing reliance on tests in teacher hiring processes, the present brief presents data on public school districts' credential and test requirements for all three SASS survey years: 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94. In addition, regional variations in test requirements for hiring are presented. At each SASS survey point, public school district respondents indicated which credentials and tests were *required* of applicants for teaching positions.[1]

From 1987–88 to 1993–94, increasing percentages of public school districts required passage of state tests of basic skills and subject knowledge in the teacher hiring process, although teacher credentials were the most widely used criteria at each survey point.

In 1987–88, there were 15,244 public school districts in the United States; in 1990–91, 15,512 districts; and in 1993–94, 14,987 districts. From 1987–88 to 1993–94, the percentages of these districts relying on the credentials of teacher applicants in the hiring process remained fairly constant and, in each survey year, were higher than the percentages of districts relying on state, national, or district tests (table 1). Of the four credentials, full standard state certification was most often required in the teacher hiring process, with over 80 percent of public school districts in each year requiring this certification in the field to be taught. At least two-thirds of districts in each survey year required graduation from state-approved teacher education programs, emergency or temporary certification, and in-field college degrees.

Among the state, national, and district tests, districts most frequently required candidates to pass state tests of basic skills in each survey year and least frequently required passage of district tests.[2] Over time, increasing percentages of public school districts required passage of state-administered basic skills and subject knowledge tests. For example, the percentage of districts that required teacher applicants to pass state tests of basic skills increased steadily from 1987–88 to 1993–94, from about 35 percent to 49 percent. Although districts increasingly required the use of each of these two tests in the teacher hiring process, this

Table 1. Percentage of public school districts requiring specific credentials and passage of specific tests when considering teacher applicants: 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94

	1987–88	1990–91	1993–94
Credentials			
Full Standard State Certification for Field to be Taught	82.6	84.1	83.3
Graduation from State-Approved Teacher Education Program	70.1	69.8	71.9
Emergency or Temporary State Certification	66.6	68.8	67.4
College Major/Minor in Field to be Taught	67.2	66.2	66.9
Tests			
Passage of State Test of Basic Skills	34.9	42.3	49.0
Passage of State Test of Subject Knowledge	23.5	34.1	39.3
Passage of the National Teachers Examination (NTE)	21.4	29.5	30.8
Passage of District Test of Basic Skills or Subject Knowledge	2.6	4.3	2.0

NOTE: In 1993–94 only, district respondents indicated whether they required the NTE Core Battery and/or the NTE Professional Specialty Area. Districts were counted as requiring the NTE if they checked either response option.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (Teacher Demand and Shortage Questionnaire for Public School Districts [LEAs]).

[1] In 1987–88, these eight criteria were evaluated by respondents in terms of *screening* teacher applicants; in 1990–91 and 1993–94, they were evaluated in terms of their use in *considering* teacher applicants.

[2] It should be noted that reliance on district-level tests may be related to district size; in 1993–94, for example, 4.4 percent of those districts serving 10,000 or more students required passage of these tests, compared to 1.7 percent of those districts serving fewer than 1,000 students. Even in large districts (i.e., districts with 10,000 or more students enrolled), however, the use of district tests was below that of national and state tests.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP 037366

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

pattern was not repeated for the National Teachers Examination (NTE)—a performance-based assessment for teachers developed by the Educational Testing Service—or for tests developed at the district level. Taking the NTE as an example, the percentage of districts requiring teacher applicants to pass this national examination leveled off in 1993–94 at about 31 percent, after an increase of nearly 8 percentage points from 1987–88 to 1990–91.

In 1993–94, state tests were relied upon more frequently than the NTE in the South and Midwest; in the Northeast, this pattern was reversed.

In 1993–94, nearly two-thirds of public school districts in the South required that teacher applicants pass state tests of basic skills and subject knowledge (table 2). In comparison, about 38 percent of Southern districts required passage of the NTE. A similar pattern emerged for the Midwest, where both types of state tests were required more frequently than the NTE in that year. For example, about 42 percent of Midwestern districts required state basic skills tests, whereas 17 percent required the NTE. In contrast, the NTE was the most frequently used teacher assessment in the Northeast, with half of all districts requiring passage of the national exam. Following the NTE, similar percentages of Northeastern districts relied on state tests of basic skills and subject knowledge—39 percent and 36 percent, respectively. In the West, districts most frequently required passage of state tests of basic skills; about 58 percent of Western districts required passage of these tests compared to about one-quarter of districts that required teacher applicants to pass state subject knowledge tests or the NTE. Across all four regions, district-level tests were required less frequently than national and state tests.

Table 2. Percentage of public school districts requiring passage of specific tests when considering teacher applicants, by region: 1993–94

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
State Test/ Basic Skills	39.0	41.8	63.0	57.7
State Test/ Subj. Knowledge	36.0	34.4	63.0	25.6
National Teachers Examination	50.0	17.0	38.1	28.5
District Test	2.3	2.1	1.5	2.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Survey (Teacher Demand and Shortage Questionnaire for Public School Districts [LEAs]).

Discussion

From 1987–88 to 1993–94, public school districts continued to require credentials more frequently than passage of specific tests. However, the passage of tests, most notably state tests of basic skills and subject knowledge, was increasingly required by districts in their teacher hiring processes during the period. Although in 1993–94 state tests of basic skills remained the most widely used form of test included in districts' hiring decisions overall, state tests of subject knowledge were used in nearly 40 percent of districts, and the NTE was used in nearly one-third of districts nationwide. Moreover, the specific tests used varied by region. For example, districts in the Midwest and South favored state tests and districts in the Northeast favored the NTE in 1993–94.

These findings raise questions that can be explored using SASS data. How many districts use multiple tests, or a mixture of credentials and tests, in their teacher hiring processes? Which types of school districts opt for more test requirements—e.g., do large, urban districts tend to use tests more than other districts? Which tests are more popular in different types of districts? Other questions reach beyond SASS data. For example, given ongoing concerns about the validity and reliability of standardized teacher assessments (Hill 1996), do the tests that are increasingly being used include a performance assessment component (e.g., portfolios)? What are the advantages and disadvantages for districts of using state or district tests as opposed to national tests or vice versa?

References and Related Publications

Choy, S.P., Medrich, E.A., Henke, R.R., and Bobbitt, S.A. (1992). *Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1987–88*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 92–120).

Choy, S.P., Henke, R.R., Alt, M.N., Medrich, E.A., and Bobbitt, S.A. (1993). *Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1990–91*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 93–146).

Henke, R.R., Choy, S.P., and Geis, S. (1996). *Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1993–94*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 96–124).

Hill, David. (1996, May 8). "Taking on the Test." *Education Week, XV*(33), 24–29.

Rossi, R.J. and Daugherty, M.S. (1996). *What Criteria Are Used in Considering Teacher Applicants?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 96–844).

Issue Briefs present information on education topics of current interest. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences are statistically significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error. For additional details on SASS data collection methods and definitions, see the following U.S. Department of Education publications: *1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey: Sample Design and Estimation (NCES 91-127, 93-449, and 96-089)* and *Quality Profile for SASS: Aspects of the Quality of Data in the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS)* (NCES 94-340).

This **Issue Brief** was prepared by Shannon Daugherty, Karen DeAngelis, and Robert Rossi, American Institutes for Research. To obtain standard errors or definitions of terms for this **Issue Brief**, or to obtain additional information about the Schools and Staffing Survey, contact Charles H. Hammer (202) 219-1330. To order additional copies of this **Issue Brief** or other NCES publications, call 1-800-424-1616. NCES publications are available on the Internet at http://www.ed.gov/NCES.

NCES 97–592